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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

RSR-01 OMB-01 GAC-01 /085 W
---------- 027655
R 241930 Z MAY 73
FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8411

C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 0752

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, GY
SUBJECT: EAST INDIAN SUPPORT FOR PNC

REF: (A) STATE 99113
(B) GEORGETOWN 728

1. REFERENCE TO GREATER EAST INDIAN PARTICIPATION AT THIS YEAR' S PNC CONGRESS (REF B) CONCERNED INCREASED VISIBILITY OF EAST INDIANS AMONG DELEGATES, PARTICULARLY FROM RURAL AREAS. PARTY SOURCES HAVE CLAIMED UP TO 35 PERCENT OF DELEGATES TO CONGRESS WERE EAST INDIAN. THIS OBVIOUS EXAGGERATION, BUT INDICATIONS ARE THAT PERHAPS AS MANY AS 20 PERCENT WERE EAST INDIANS. THESE APPREARED BE CONCENTRATED IN DELEGATIONS FROM SUGAR ESTATES AND RICE GROWING AREAS.

2. IT STILL EMBASSY VIEW THAT SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER EAST INDIANS WILL FOLLOW TRADITION OF " VOTING FOR ONE OF US" AND SUPPORT JAGAN AND PPP. HOWEVER, IT ALSO CLEAR THAT MANY EAST INDIANS IN RURAL AREAS RECOGNIZE PNC GOVERNMENT AS SOURCE OF BADLY NEEDED PAST AND FUTURE ASSISTANCE, AND THEY INCREASINGLY WILLING RESPOND TO PNC EFFORTS TO GAIN THEIR SUPPORT, PARTICULARLY AS MANY IF NOT MOST APPEAR TO BELIEVE BURNHAM WILL WIN FORTHCOMING ELECTION. IT IMPOSSIBLE AT THIS POINT TO JUDGE DEGREE OF SUPPORT BURNHAM MAY HAVE GAINED IN THIS REGARD, ALTHOUGH HIS FREQUENT TRIPS TO AREAS INHABITED LARGELY OR SOLEY
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BY EAST INDIANS AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN IN THESE AREAS HAVE BROUGHT OUT INCREASING NUMBERS OF INHABITANTS WELCOMING HIM AND PETITIONING FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE OF VARIOUS KINDS.

3. PNC HAS ALSO EVIDENTLY MADE SOME INROADS AMONG EAST INDIANS THROUGH ITS CONTROL OF MAHA SABHA, AN INDIAN RELIGIOUS AND CULUTRAL ORGANIZATION, LEADERSHIP OF WHICH IS LOYAL TO BURNHAM. (ITS HEAD, SASE NARAIN, IS SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE.)

4. EMBASSY PERCEIVES NO PARTICULAR " NEW FOUND ATTRATIVENESS" OF BURNHAM TO EAST INDIAN VOTERS (REF A) BUT DOES SEE SOME EVIDENCE THAT CUMULATIVE IMPATIENCE WITH JAGAN' S INEFFECTIVNESS COUPLED WITH THE BURNHAM GOVERNMENT' S DEMONSTRATED INTEREST IN EXTENDING ECONOMIC BENEFITS IN EAST INDIAN AREAS AND " SUCCESSES" ON DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL SCENES HAVE HAD SOME FFECT. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT BURNHAM IS WINNING THE EAST INDIAN VOTE PER SE. IT DOES APPEAR, HOWEVER, THAT MORE EAST INDIANS THAN PREVIOUSLY AREB BEGINNINGTO LOOK TO ACTUAL SOURCE OF BENEFITS AND MIGHT SUPPORT BURNHAM IN THE ELECTION. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE AT THIS POINT TO ESTIMATE NUMBER OF EAST INDIANS WHO MIGHT ACTUALLY CAST BALLOTS FOR PNC UNDER PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION SYSTEM. ALSO, IT SHOULD BE KEPT IN MIND THAT CULTURAL AND SOCIAL ANTAGONISMS BETWEEN EAST INDIANS AND AFRICANS REMAIN STRONG AND COULD BE DECIDING FACTOR IN FINAL ANALYSIS.

5. EMBASSY WILL PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO QUESTION OF EAST INDIAN SUPPORT FOR PNC AND REPORT FURTHER AS EVIDENCE WARRANTS. KING

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